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vention's offer of assistance to peoples to gain their liberty, at first sight an almost quixotically unselfish formula, proved merely a cloak for aggression, since French armies were the judges of whether the peoples were desirous of liberty, and assumed that it could only be enjoyed by annexation to the Republic. Thus in the space of a few months in the summer and autumn of 1792 militant nationalism revealed not only its magical power of mobilizing the latent strength of a people, but the temptation to a virile nation to carry fire and sword into the lands of its neighbours.

The fall of the Bastille and the Declaration of the Rights of Man put into acts and words the muffled aspirations of the masses all over Europe, and gave to the humble and disinherited a new sense of human dignity. When France in trumpet tones demanded the downfall of feudalism, proclaimed the equality of burdens, and declared every man possessed of certain inalienable rights, generous hearts were thrilled by the warmth and the glory of the sunrise. The windows of the prison-house* seemed to fly open and the light of liberty streamed in. Enthusiasm for the Revolution was intensified

by the conviction of its universal significance, which was recognized both by those who took part in it and those who watched it from afar. Condorcet proclaimed that a good law was good for all, just as a true proposition was true for all. The orators on the Seine were fully conscious that the eyes of the world were upon them. "Your laws will be the laws of Europe if you are worthy of them," declared Mirabeau to the Constituent Assembly; "the Revolution will make* the round of the globe." "If we succeed," cried André Chénier, the poet, "the destiny of Europe will be changed. Men will regain their rights and the people their

sovereignty. Kings
struck by the success of our labours and the
example of our
monarch may share their power with their
peoples ; and per-
haps the peoples, happier than we, may obtain
a free and
equitable constitution without passing through
our troubles.
Then the name of France will be blessed upon
earth." " Who-
ever regards this Revolution as exclusively
French," echoed
Mallet du Pan, the eloquent Swiss publicist, " is
incapable of
pronouncing judgement upon it." " It is one of
those events,"
wrote Gentz, the German Burke, " which belong
to the whole
human race. It is of such dimensions that it is
hardly per-
missible to occupy oneself with any subordinate
interest, of
such magnitude that posterity will eagerly
inquire how con-